

# *Medicare*

*Savings for  
Qualified  
Beneficiaries*

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*Help in Paying  
Medicare Expenses  
Available to Some  
Low-Income Persons*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Health Care Financing Administration



## Medicare Savings For You

If you are elderly and poor or disabled and poor, your State may pay some or all of your Medicare expenses.

Federal law requires that State Medicaid programs pay Medicare costs for **certain** elderly and disabled persons with low incomes and very limited assets. You might qualify for this assistance even if you are not entitled to Medicare.

What this means is that, depending on your income and the value of things you own, you may not have to pay any money out of your own pocket for Medicare's premiums, deductibles and coinsurance. You could save hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars each year.

### Two Programs Offer Help

There are two programs to help people pay their Medicare expenses. One is called the "Qualified Medicare Beneficiary" or "QMB" program. It is for persons whose incomes are at or below the national poverty level. It covers the costs of the Medicare premiums, coinsurance and deductibles that Medicare beneficiaries normally pay out of their own pockets.

If you qualify for assistance under the QMB program, you will not have to pay Medicare's \$676 hospital deductible or the daily coinsurance charges for extended hospital and skilled nursing facility stays. Additionally, you will not have to pay the 1993 monthly premium of \$36.60 for Medicare Medical Insurance (Part B) or the \$100 annual Part B deductible. Nor will you have

to pay the 20 percent coinsurance for Medicare-covered doctor bills. You will, however, continue to be responsible for paying for items and services not covered by Medicare such as routine physicals, dental care, hearing aids, and eyeglasses.

The second program is called the "Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary" or "SLMB" program. It is for persons whose incomes are slightly higher than the national poverty level, but not more than 10 percent higher. If you qualify for assistance under the SLMB program, the State is only required to pay the \$36.60 monthly Part B premium for you. You will continue to be responsible for Medicare's deductibles and coinsurance and for charges for health care services and items not covered by Medicare.

### How Do I Qualify?

The rules may vary from State to State but, in general terms, to qualify for assistance under the QMB program, you must meet the following requirements:

1. You must be entitled to Medicare Hospital Insurance (Part A). (If you do not have Medicare Part A or do not know whether you are entitled to Part A, check with your local Social Security Administration office or call 1-800-772-1213. Most people are entitled to Part A based on their own employment or the employment of a spouse. Even if you or your spouse did not work or did not work long enough to entitle you to Part A, your State may buy it for you.)
2. Your financial resources such as bank accounts, stocks and bonds cannot exceed \$4,000 for one person or \$6,000 for a couple. Some things—like the

home you live in, one automobile, burial plots, home furnishings, personal jewelry and life insurance—usually do not count as resources.

3. Your income in 1993 must be less than \$601 per month for one person or \$806 per month for a couple, except in Alaska and Hawaii. In Alaska the income limits are \$745 per month for one person and \$1,002 per month for a couple. In Hawaii they are \$690 per month for one person and \$925 per month for a couple. Income includes, but is not limited to, Social Security benefits, pensions, and wages. Interest payments and dividends can also count as income.

### What If My Income Is Slightly Higher Than The Poverty Level?

If you do not qualify for QMB assistance because your income is too high, you may be able to get help under the SLMB program. To qualify for SLMB assistance, you must meet requirements one and two listed above. In addition, your income in 1993 must be less than \$659 a month for one person or \$884 a month for a couple, except in Alaska and Hawaii. In Alaska the income limits are \$818 per month for one person and \$1,100 per month for a couple. In Hawaii they are \$758 per month for one person and \$1,016 per month for a couple.



### Where Should I Apply?

If you already have Medicare Part A and think you qualify for either QMB or SLMB assistance, you must file an application for Medicaid at a State, county, or local

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medical assistance office—not a Federal office. You can get the telephone number for your medical assistance office by calling 1-800-638-6833. Give the operator the name of your State and county. Explain that you want the telephone number for the nearest office that can help you file for assistance under either the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary or Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary program.

If you think you qualify for this assistance but do not have Medicare Part A, you should first contact a Social Security Administration (SSA) office. You may need to file an application for Part A. The telephone number and address for the nearest Social Security Administration office can be found in the telephone book. If you need help in getting this information, call 1-800-772-1213. If you are entitled to Medicare under the Railroad Retirement system, contact your nearest Railroad Retirement Board field office.

## **What Do I Ask For?**

When you contact your medical assistance office, ask about the QMB or SLMB program or the “Medicare Buy-In” program. Explain that you think you qualify for help in paying your Medicare costs and you want to know when and where you can file an application for Medicaid.

## **What Should I Bring With Me?**

When you file an application for Medicaid, be prepared to answer questions about your income, property you own, and other assets. You will be expected to have copies of records such as bank statements, property



deeds, and insurance policies, and other documents that show the value of any resources you own. Verification of your enrollment in Medicare Part A and of your income and assets will be important in determining your eligibility for assistance. As your application is processed, you may be required to go through a face-to-face interview with a Medicaid caseworker.

## **If Your Application Is Denied**

If your application for assistance under either the **QMB** or **SLMB** program is denied, you have a right to appeal within 30 days of the denial. You file an appeal at the place you filed your Medicaid application. You are guaranteed a hearing. If you need assistance or advice, you may want to contact your State Agency on Aging. Assistance also may be available from the Legal Aid or Legal Services office in your State. These offices provide free legal services to people whose incomes are below the poverty line. The telephone numbers for all State offices can be found in the telephone directory under "State Government."

## **For More Information About Medicare**

For more information about the Medicare program, please refer to The Medicare Handbook. Free copies are available from any Social Security office.



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